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PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
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FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9165  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE  
RHEHWSR/WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC//NSC//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000204

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/18/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [EINV](#) [ENRG](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: RRT COORDINATOR LUNCH WITH IRAQI PRESIDENT TALABANI

(U) Classified By: Regional Coordinator James Yellin for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is an Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Reconstruction Team (RRT) cable.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY: At a lunch with Regional Coordinator and Regional Reconstruction Team (RRT) Officers on January 11, Iraqi President Jalal Tale Talabani Praises Bush For Way Forward In Iraq  
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[1](#)3. (C) Iraqi President Jalal Talabani hosted a lunch for Regional Coordinator and RRT Officers at Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) party head

[1](#)4. (C) Talabani commented during the lunch that the January 10 speech by President Bush on the way forward in Iraq was excellent and signaled Talabani Admits Corruption Prevents Investment  
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[1](#)5. (C) President Talabani asked for assistance in encouraging U. S. private investment in his home province of Sulaimaniyah. He said that alth

[1](#)6. (C) Regional Coordinator replied that potential investors in the electricity sector would want to be assured of a cost-recovery system in w

[1](#)7. (C) In response to a question by Talabani on barriers to U. S. investment, Regional Coordinator cited corruption and the lack of a transpar Talabani Says No PKK Offices in Sulaimaniyah  
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[1](#)8. (C) Regional Coordinator called on the Sulaimaniyah authorities to close all offices of the Kurdish terrorist group the PKK, and refuse saf A New Press Law is Needed  
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[1](#)9. (C) Regional Coordinator stressed the importance of freedom of the press in an open society. President Talabani agreed, commenting that tw

[1](#)10. (C) Note: In 2006 a committee of the Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA) took up the issue of developing a regional press law. However, the

[1](#)11. (C) Comment: Corruption is pervasive, not only in Sulaimaniyah province, but in the rest of the KRG. We doubt that the PUK will be able to

[1](#)12. (C) Comment (cont'd): Most press and media outlets in the region are funded and run by the political parties. Sulaimaniyah province is hos

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